



Sleeping Shelterers: Two Women and a Child

Henry Moore

Not on display

Title/Description: Sleeping Shelterers: Two Women and a Child

Artist/Maker: Henry Moore

Born: 1941 - 1941

Object Type: Drawing

Materials: Chalk, Ink, Paper, Pencil, Watercolour, Wax crayon

Measurements: Unframed: (h. 373 x w. 550 x d. 1 mm) Framed: (h. 614 x w. 786 x d. 55 mm)

Inscription: signature

Accession Number: 93

Historic Period: 20th century

Production Place: Britain, England, Europe

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Credit Line: Donated by Robert and Lisa Sainsbury, 1973

Sleeping Shelterers: Two Women and a Child combines two of Moore's favoured sculptural subjects: the reclining figure and the family group. The family group related to Moore's fascination with the mother and child, which allowed for the visual opportunity to present complementary forms: large and small, protective and protected. Here the encompassing blanket adds an additional visual layer and sense of a cocoon-like enclosure for the figures. The drapery represents a new interest for Moore, as it had not yet found a sculptural outlet in his work.

After witnessing people sheltering during the Blitz on a journey via Belsize Park station, Moore began a series of drawings of the scenes. He began to visit the London Underground especially for inspiration. He showed his sketchbook of the drawings to his friend Kenneth Clark, who had set up the War Artists Advisory Committee, who subsequently encouraged Moore to become an Official War Artist. Moore therefore began to create the drawings in an official capacity.

Moore made just a handful of shelter drawings like this, in which the viewer looks along the body up to the looming sleeping faces. Wilkinson writes that these are 'Among the most powerful and disturbing' of Moore's shelter drawings. [1] Moore's *Pink and Green Sleepers* (1941) is very similar compositionally. It was selected for acquisition by the War Artists' Advisory Committee and is now in the collection of the British Museum. The Committee selected seventeen out of around sixty-five of Moore's full-size shelter drawings to buy, which they distributed to museum collections. *Pink and Green Sleepers* is a subject in Jill Craigie's 1944 documentary *Out of Chaos*. The viewer watches Moore sketching in the Underground before witnessing him coat the page with watercolour, which is resisted by the wax, and the formerly invisible image is revealed.

Although this drawing is signed and dated 1940 by Henry Moore, Wilkinson believes the drawing would have been executed in late 1941, as a study for it appears towards the end of the Second Shelter Sketchbook. [2]

Tania Moore, September 2020

[1] Alan Wilkinson, *The Drawings of Henry Moore* (London and Ontario: Tate and the Art Gallery of Ontario, 1977), p.35.

[2] *Ibid.*, p.113.

Exhibitions

'Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery', Dulwich Picture Gallery, London, 12/5/2004 - 12/9/2004

'Bill Brandt / Henry Moore', The Hepworth Wakefield, UK, 7/2/2020 - 1/11/2020

'Bill Brandt | Henry Moore', Sainsbury Centre, UK, 3/12/2020 - 11/4/2021

Further Reading

Steven Hooper (ed.), Robert and Lisa Sainsbury Collection, volume 1 (Norwich: University of East Anglia, 1997)

Ann Garrould, Anita Feldman Bennett and Ian Dejardin, Henry Moore at Dulwich Picture Gallery (London: Scala Publishers, 2004)

Martina Droth and Paul Messier, Bill Brandt | Henry Moore (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2020)

Tania Moore, Henry Moore: Friendships and Legacies (Norwich: Sainsbury Centre, 2020)

Provenance

Purchased by Lisa Sainsbury for Robert Sainsbury from William Ohly at the Berkeley Galleries in 1942.

Donated to the University of East Anglia in 1973 (Sainsbury Centre).
